

HLHS Members Newsletter

January 2021

huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



We would like to hear from you! Please send any news, details of events and books, requests for information and comments that you think may be of interest to other Huddersfield Local History Society members to

huddshistorynews@gmail.com



Longwood Tower (Roy Brook & Brian Kilner Collection)

Welcome to our January 2021 newsletter, and best wishes for the New Year. In this month's newsletter, you'll find details of upcoming events and recent news, as well as short articles on a couple of topical subjects. We hope you enjoy it.

David Griffiths and Dave Pattern

HLHS Committee

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Cyril Pearce

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Brian Haigh

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*With the exception
of our own web site,
Huddersfield Local
History Society is
not responsible for
the content of any
web sites linked to
in this newsletter.*

Our January Talk

We continue our programme of on-line talks with:

25 January 2021

Highfields – a Most Handsome Suburb

The Highfields area was Huddersfield's first middle-class suburb, developed from the early 1820s with elegant Georgian houses. It was already home to Highfield Chapel, founded in 1771, which was joined by other significant religious and educational institutions throughout the 19th century. Today, cut off from the town centre by the Ring Road, it is neglected and rarely visited. Presenting historic maps and images and contemporary photography, the Society's publications secretary, David Griffiths, will explain how and why the area developed, explore its buildings and institutions, and introduce some significant 19th century figures who shaped the area and lived there.

The talk will be [available from our website](#) on and after 25 January or, if you have a 'smart TV' that can access videos on YouTube, you can find all our talks by searching for **Huddersfield Local History Society** or **#hlhs2020**

You may also wish to subscribe to our new [YouTube channel](#) where you can find this season's previous talks.

David's talk draws on the book of the same title, newly published by Huddersfield Civic Society, with photography by Andrew Caveney:

www.huddersfieldcivicsociety.org.uk/publications.html

Are you a social media adept?

As a Society we pride ourselves on a fine range of print publications and an excellent website. We can't say the same, however, about our presence on social media, which play an ever-larger role in publicity and marketing. We're looking for a member who can help with this – might it be you? If so, please contact publicity officer Chris Verguson for a discussion (without commitment!) at info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

BALH Online Events

The Society belongs to the British Association for Local History, not least for the insurance cover it provides for our events. They are offering a range of online workshops and talks, and offering a discount for affiliated societies' members, which in our case is F-27428X. As luck should have it, the next open-access event, on 13 March, will be **How to grow your local history social media presence**. BALH's Social Media Fellow, Daniella Gonzalez will provide an introduction to the various social media platforms available and how local history societies can best use them to promote their work and engage with the wider history community. Perfect grounding for that new volunteer!

You'll find details on the [BALH website](#), and there's much else to explore there too.

Edward Law History Prize

The Edward Law History Prize was set up in 2017 by the Society in recognition of our member and prolific local historian, the late Edward Law. We remain very keen to encourage members to undertake and write up their own historical research, and the competition is open to anyone who has not previously published any local history. Further details are in the recent Christmas *Journal* and this year's revised closing date is **28 February**. For advice on an entry, please contact Chris Verguson: info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Free access to Ancestry

Good news for family history detectives. Remote access to Ancestry for all Kirklees library members has been extended to the end of March 2021. You'll need a library card number, and a PIN number for Libraries online, to access the service from your device. There's more information about Libraries' online services here:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/libraries/online-resources.aspx>

Online Talk on W. H. Crossland

Sheila Binns, author of the recent book on architect William Henry Crossland, is giving an online talk to the Victorian Society on Wednesday 17 February at 7pm. For further details, including booking links, see victoriansociety.org.uk/events

For a background to Crossland's activities in and around his home town of Huddersfield, see [Edward Law's website](#).

Latest on the Hall of Science

Society members may remember the event we held at this historic building in Bath St during Heritage Open Days in September 2019. At that time the building, opened in 1839 as the base for the town's Owenite socialists, was home to Ramsey Clay, painters and decorators, but planning permission has now been given for its conversion to apartments. Our earlier plans to commemorate the building's history with a plaque have been on hold during lockdown, but we are in touch with new owners and hope to revive them in due course. Meanwhile Professor Edward Royle has published a brief new history of the building on the [Chapels Society website](#). Alan Brooke's comprehensive history can also be found at his [Underground Histories website](#).

Mrs Sunderland – the Yorkshire Queen of Song

The recent reprint of a book review from 1999 in the Christmas Special edition of the *Journal* has provided an opportunity for our member Angela Sykes, who is Archivist of the Mrs Sunderland Festival, to correct one or two common misconceptions about the Yorkshire Queen of Song. Born in Brighouse, Mrs Sunderland was baptised Susannah Sykes – not Susan - and began her career in that town, rather than in Deighton as stated. Although concentrating on teaching after her retirement from public performance in 1864, she tutored throughout her career, regularly performing alongside her own female pupils. We hope to return to the celebrated career of the 'Calderdale Nightingale' in a future edition of the *Journal*.

R. 98621 260. 10/1/97.

"MRS. SUNDERLAND" MUSICAL COMPETITION.
(INSTRUMENTAL CLASSES).

Class..... XX
Number..... 22

Maximum Marks 100. 86
Marks awarded.....

REMARKS.

Memory
a pleasantly light touch - &
a tritabu pace. The playing
was neat & steady as a rule
& there was a good sense of
character. a few moments
where the control of touch was
lost a little.

[Signature]

Handel's *Messiah* – A Yorkshire Tradition

by Brian Haigh

For the first time since 1863, there was no annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* by the Huddersfield Choral Society in 2020. Even in the dark days of World War Two, the great oratorio was performed each year – there were even matinee and additional performances as well as the first national broadcast by the BBC of the society's *Messiah*. Before Covid restrictions were enforced, Halifax Choral Society sang its 202nd annual performance in March. Handel's great work is as popular now as it was over two centuries ago when early performances captured the public imagination and fixed the German-born composer's melodies firmly in the minds of local people.

It is unfortunate that there are few records of the early years of the Huddersfield Choral Society. What we do know for certain is that the society formed at a meeting at the Plough Inn on Westgate on Tuesday 7th June 1836. Later in the year, Friday 30th December to be exact, selections from *Messiah* were performed in the Spring Street School Room. It was not until the end of 1838 or the beginning of 1839, and in the recently opened Philosophical Hall (later to become the Theatre Royal) in Ramsden Street, that the complete oratorio *was gone through by the performers which is one of the best and most effective bands in the kingdom, in very superior style*.

This verdict of the Halifax Express, on the 5th January 1839, must have greatly pleased members of the newly-formed choir. In many ways *Messiah* was seen as the test for any aspirant choral group or choir.

It is more than likely that members of the new society would have taken part in performances and at events like the Yorkshire Musical Festivals, which were held in the 1820s and 30s in York Minster, the region's largest venue, for the benefit of the hospitals at Leeds, York and Sheffield. Others may have known one another through membership of clubs and glees which had met for the enjoyment of making music in local inns and private homes.

In the second half of the 18th century, Henry Bates, parish clerk and keeper of the Ring O' Bells inn, had such a club at his house in Church Street, Halifax. One evening his talented musical son Joah arrived from London and threw a copy of *Messiah* to the assembled musicians inviting them to see what they could make of it. *At first sight, they pronounced it too difficult*. But, *by dint of practice* having mastered the score, which existed only in manuscript (it was first published in 1767), the group with various augmented forces gave the first recorded performances of



Ring O' Bells, Halifax

Messiah in Yorkshire at the inauguration of the new organ in Halifax Parish Church in August 1766.

... a band of between 90 and 100 instruments and voices ... We had between twenty & thirty Violins, seven tenor Violins, six Violoncello's [sic], two double Basses, four Hautbois, four Bassoons, two trumpets, two French horns, Kettle drums, & a Chorus of about forty singers, besides the principal singers.

Singers and musicians from across the region, including choirs from Kirkheaton and Saddleworth, took part on two consecutive evenings

Though the performances were judged a great success — *they never heard anything in London to equal it* — there was an underlying controversy. The cost of the instrument by the celebrated Swiss organ builder John Snetzler would add to the rate collected across the huge parish stretching to Todmorden and beyond, and fall on Nonconformist and Anglican alike and benefit Halifax to a greater extent than the outlying townships.

The concerts stayed for long in the local collective memory and played a major role in fostering an appreciation of Handel's work, particularly the choral works and *Messiah* in particular. One 19th century writer claimed that it was through these performances that the *great Christmas Oratorio first gained a hold in the affections of Yorkshire choralists which it has never since lost*. Now with its fine organ, Halifax Parish Church provided a suitable venue for performance and, together with the appointment of an organist added to the town's thriving musical tradition and reputation. On a musical tour of the country in March 1788, Charles Dibdin wrote:

...Halifax, which is said to be the most musical spot for its size in the kingdom:— for there Mrs Bates received her musical education - there Mr Bates has so planted a veneration for the works of Handel, that children lisp "For unto us a child is born", and clothmakers, as they sweat under their loads in the cloth-hall, roar out "For his yoke is easy and his burden is light." I have been assured, for a fact, that more than one man in Halifax can take any part in the chorusses [sic] of the Messiah and go regularly through the whole oratorio by heart: and, indeed the facility with which the common people join together throughout the greatest part of Yorkshire and Lancashire, in every species of choral music, is truly astonishing.

This sowed the seed for the foundation in 1817 of the Halifax Choral Society, the world's oldest choral society, which in November 2018 performed its 200th annual *Messiah*. The Huddersfield Choral Society celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2011. Since 1836, it has given more than three hundred performances of *Messiah*, not only in Huddersfield, but also in London, Manchester, Cardiff, Ely, Stratford upon Avon, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Oporto and Brno. Whilst most have taken place in concert halls, in the 1970s, two performances were given in HM Prisons. On these occasions, the chorus '*Let us break their bonds asunder*' was omitted.

Through concerts and recordings Huddersfield Choral Society's name is almost synonymous with that of Handel's *Messiah*. But the society has a wide repertoire and has recently premiered two new works written in response to Covid-19 inspired by its members. With words by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage set to music by Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Daniel Kildane, *We'll Sing* [can be found on YouTube](#), a platform of which Handel would surely have approved.

Brian Haigh



Huddersfield Town Hall

The Huddersfield Choral Society.

REHEARSAL CALENDAR FOR 1952.

"KING DAVID" (Honneger). } 1st concert
 "MISSA BREVIS" (Kodaly). }
 "MESSIAH" (Handel). }
 "BEETHOVEN NINTH (Choral) SYMPHONY (Mendels)

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| FRIDAY | August | 22 | 7.30 p.m. | Men only |
| " | " | 29 | " | Ladies only |
| " | September | 5 | " | |
| " | " | 12 | " | |
| " | " | 19 | " | |
| " | " | 26 | " | |
| " | October | 3 | " | |
| " | " | 10 | " | |
| " | " | 17 | " | |
| " | " | 24 | " | |
| " | " | 31 | " | |
| THURSDAY | November | 6 | 7.15 p.m. | [Sir Malcolm] |
| FRIDAY | " | 7 | " | Concert |
| " | " | 14 | 7.30 p.m. | |
| " | " | 21 | " | |
| " | " | 28 | " | |
| " | December | 5 | " | |
| " | " | 12 | " | |
| WEDNESDAY | " | 17 | " | |
| THURSDAY | " | 18 | 7.15 p.m. | Concert |
| MONDAY | " | 22 | " | " |

IMPORTANT NOTES.

Rehearsals. As the space on the Orchestra for these Concerts will be very limited, only those Members who have attended the maximum number of Rehearsals [including the last two] will be allowed to sing at the Concerts.

Hired Music. Those Members using Hired Music must return their Copies to the Librarian [Mr. H. Whittaker] not later than the evening of the Concert.

Subscriptions. Members are asked to pay their Subscriptions on the evening of the First Rehearsal or as soon after as possible so as to relieve the Secretary of any unnecessary work.

**ALL REHEARSALS AT QUEEN ST. SCHOOLS
UNLESS OTHERWISE ANNOUNCED.**

Yours sincerely, P. BARBER, Hon. Choir Secretary.

1952 Huddersfield Choral Society Rehearsal Calendar,
annotated by Miss L. Berry of 26 Newsome Road South

Anti-Vaxxers, 19th Century Style

by Brian Haigh

Whilst undertaking a search in British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers, I came across the following story:

Huddersfield Chronicle, 19 January 1884, p 2.

ANTI-VACCINATION

Fred Beaumont, draper of Marsden, appeared in answer to a summons, charged with neglecting to have his child, Ann Gertrude vaccinated. Mr Broadhead [prosecutor] stated that the child had been born on the 25th November, 1882, and had not been vaccinated. The defendant said he had a conscientious objection to vaccination, and he pleaded for a mitigation of the fine, but the Bench inflicted the full penalty, 20s. and costs. Beaumont was also summoned for neglecting to have his daughter, Marian Edith, vaccinated. Mr Broadhead said that the child was three years old and 12 months since last August defendant was fined 20s and costs for neglecting to have his child vaccinated. He asked for an order to have the child vaccinated within 14 days, which was granted and the defendant ordered to pay 10s.9d costs. Joseph Wilkinson, weaver of Slaithwaite, was similarly charged. His child was born on the 22nd January, 1882, and on the 24th of last January, he was fined 20s. and costs. The same order as in the last case was asked for and granted, and the defendant ordered to pay 10s. the expenses. The defendant, on leaving the box said: You might as well save your time and my money, because it will not have to be done.

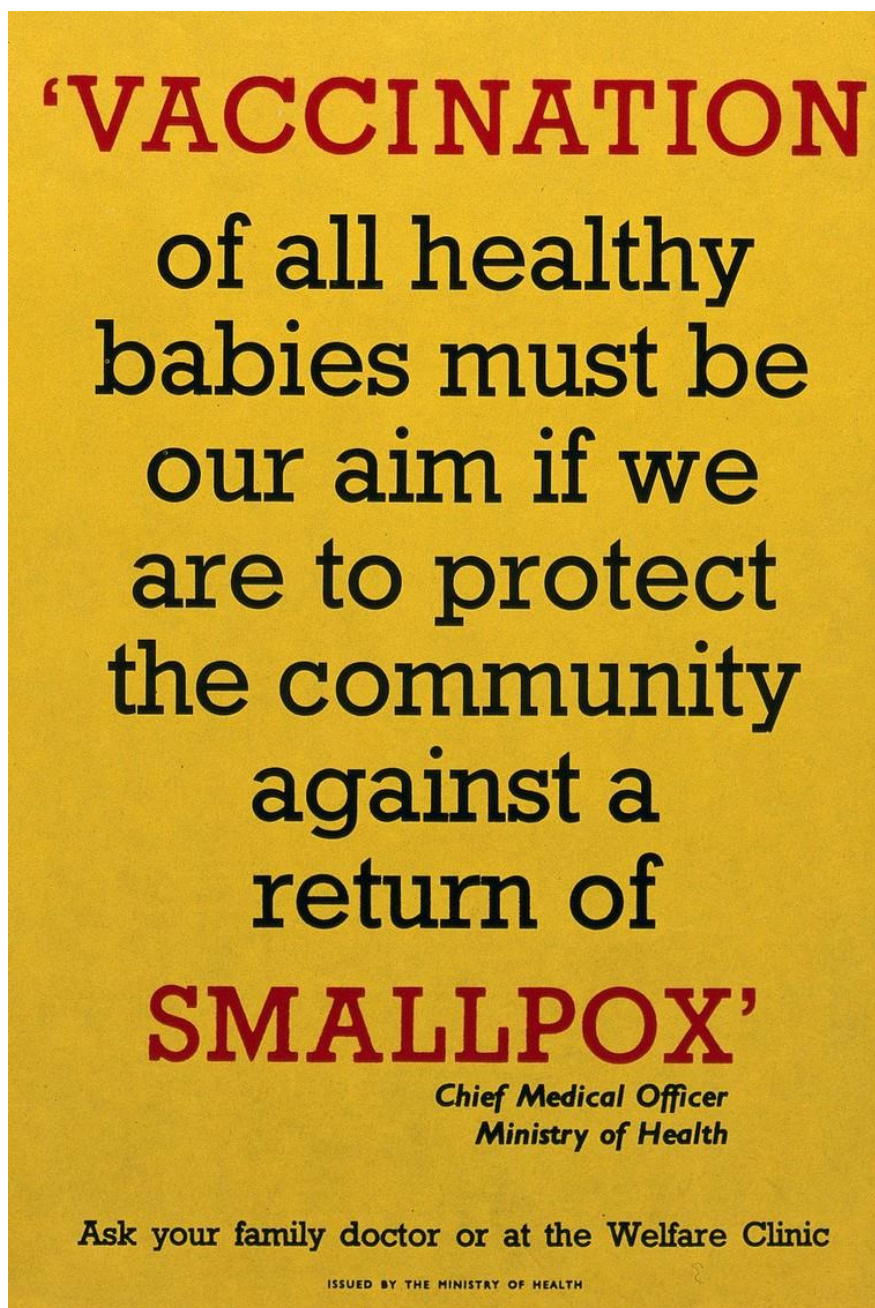
It is, perhaps, surprising that the two defendants came from the Colne Valley where there was a history of vaccination which had been promoted by the Countess of Dartmouth.

In 1853, compulsory vaccination against smallpox was introduced for infants up to three months of age. Despite the high mortality from smallpox – about 15% of those who were infected by the virus - the Act met with opposition from some people who claimed that it was unsafe or unnecessary, whilst others demanded the right to control their own bodies and those of their children. This led to public protests and the formation of anti-vaccination societies. A national Anti-Vaccination League was formed in 1893. Vaccination proved successful in eliminating smallpox as a cause of death in England & Wales and compulsory vaccination ended in 1948. Following a programme of mass vaccination co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation, smallpox was finally eradicated from those parts of the world where it had been endemic by 1978.

As recently as 1962, there was an outbreak of the potentially fatal disease in Bradford, brought into the country by a nine-year-old girl, who had arrived just a month earlier

from her home country of Pakistan. In an effort to contain the disease and stop it spreading, all 900 known direct and indirect contacts of the girl, who later died, were traced, observed and if necessary, isolated in hospitals.

Over a period of four days, around 250,000 people were vaccinated, not only in Bradford, but in the surrounding area. In Huddersfield queues formed along Peel Street and into Ramsden Street for vaccinations which were administered in the town hall which had become a temporary vaccination centre. I was one of those who joined the queue!



Editor's note: over 400 of the annual Medical Officer of Health reports for our local area have been digitised by the Wellcome Library and are available to read online. An index can be [found here](#).

125 Years Ago...

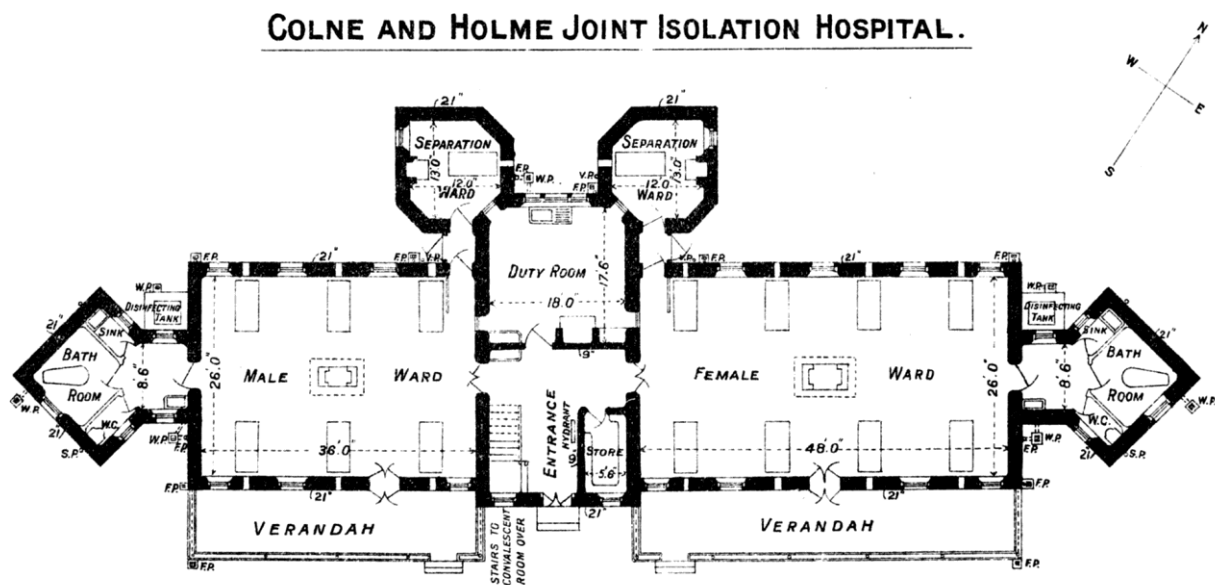
In January 1896, it was reported in the local press that a resident of Brook Lane, Golcar, had contracted smallpox after visiting the Wakefield Christmas Market and was removed to the Moor Top Smallpox Hospital whilst his house was disinfected.

Also known as the Colne Valley Smallpox Hospital, the building was in fact an unoccupied farm at Moor Top, Meltham Edge, that had been leased by Linthwaite Local Board following a virulent outbreak of smallpox in the Colne Valley in late December 1892. The following year, further outbreaks led to the Local Boards of Slaithwaite, Golcar and Marsden paying to send their cases to Moor Top.



As you can probably imagine, Meltham Local Board was far from happy that so many smallpox cases from neighbouring areas were being sent to Meltham! In fact, that may have been the primary reason why Meltham initially refused to be involved with subsequent plans put forward to build a single joint infectious disease hospital for the Colne and Holme Valleys under the provisions of the Isolation Hospitals Act 1893.

With no progress being made on the plans, West Riding County Council intervened in 1901 and purchased land at Spring Head, Meltham. The Colne & Holme Joint Isolation Hospital – later known as Moorview Hospital – was built to a design by Huddersfield architect Joseph Berry and opened in September 1904.



150 Years Ago...

The Huddersfield Choral Society held a concert on 17 February 1871 for the benefit of Joshua Sykes (c.1800-1878), who was the oldest member of the society and had reportedly played the same bass trombone for 54 years.

HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY.
BENEFIT CONCERT, for **JOSHUA SYKES**
(the oldest member of the Society), 17th February,
1871.
Selections from "Judas and Samson" for the First Part;
Second Part, "Miscellaneous."

250 Years Ago...

Thomas Jefferys was one of England's leading cartographers and, published in the year of his death in 1771, his survey of Yorkshire was one of several that he produced of English counties.



The individual sheets have been [digitised by McMaster University](#) in Canada but you may find it easier to [view the zoomable versions](#) on Huddersfield Exposed.